



The Goodness of America

Free Education

Dale Stoner of Victorville, California, is a savvy real estate man, and his hard work has surely paid off as he has done very well for himself. Stoner, 86, and his wife, Od, decided that they wanted to share their wealth and give back to their local community and are doing so by providing eight lucky and deserving students a free college education.

Daily Press reported that Stoner earned most of his money “from two shopping centers he owned in Spring Valley Lake, one of which sold for \$3.3 million.” Stoner told *Daily Press* that his four children are successful and that he has provided financial assistance to two generations of grandchildren, and so he feels it is time to reach out to others in need.

“To me it’s all very simple. The money is there,” he said. “There is no need on my side, my kids, and so I said ‘swell.’”

Stoner and his wife did not know where to begin, so they turned to the phone book and found University Prep, a high school in their community.

He decided that he will pay the college tuition for two students from University Prep each year through 2019, which will amount to eight students in total.

Stoner reached out to officials at University Prep and asked them “to choose two students that will appreciate the help, that are qualified by what they’ve already accomplished and that need the help.”

School counselors and the teacher leadership team selected two deserving students: Tonantcy Vargas and Ronaldo Lopez.

Stoner met with Vargas and Lopez in July to break the news to them in person. Vargas reportedly broke down and cried. “They told me a wonderful man will be paying for my college,” Vargas said. “I was just trying not to cry the whole time.”

Lopez was equally touched. “This makes me feel very great inside,” he said.

Daily Press reported that Stoner wants nothing in return except a guarantee that the students will take his gift seriously and graduate so that they may one day be able to pay forward this act of kindness, a challenge that the recipients are happy to accept. “I want him to see me graduate so that he knows that he didn’t do this for nothing,” Vargas said.

Lopez plans to attend Cal State Fullerton, where he will study engineering, while Vargas is going to Cal Poly Pomona to study accounting.

The Gift of a Fire Station

A lottery winner in the small town of Camden Point, Missouri, wanted to thank his local firefighters for saving his father’s life and did so in an incredible way: He built them a new fire station.

In 2012, Mark and Cindy Hill won more than \$290 million in the Powerball jackpot, and have been discreetly donating to numerous causes ever since.

But their latest good deed was far too big to keep quiet. They built a brand new fire station in Camden



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Point as a way to show their gratitude to the local firefighters, who saved the life of Mark's father not once, but twice.

The impressive energy-efficient station boasts training rooms, large bay areas for trucks and local ambulances, and heated floors. According to KMBC, Hill engaged in "meticulous planning with the fire district, architects and contracts" to create a structure that would last for many years.

The new fire station was formally dedicated on July 16, with many of the town's 500 residents present to participate in the celebration.

Steve Folck of the Camden Point Fire District Board says that the board is "very blessed" to have been gifted such a "beautiful structure."

But the Hills are uncomfortable with the attention they've received for their kindness. "You know what? If my wife and I could have built this without anybody knowing that her and I were building it, that's exactly what we would have done," he told KMBC News.

Uber Rideto Brazil

After Liz Willock rode with Uber driver Ellis Hill on July 26 headed to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she was inspired to do a good deed for the man with whom she conversed for the hour-long car ride.

Willock learned that Hill's son, Darrell, was representing Team USA as a shot-putter in the Olympics, but Hill could not afford to travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to cheer for him.

"When I told her about my son she was really amazed, but when she asked me if I was going over there to watch him, I said I really couldn't afford it," Hill, a retired bus driver, told *People*.

Willock was saddened by Hill's situation. "It was devastating to hear that," Willock said. "Here's this wonderful man who has a close relationship with his son and I know any parent would want to see their son or daughter compete at the Olympics, but it was very understandable how that could be out of reach."

Luckily, Willock was in a position to be able to offer assistance to Hill. SunnySkyz.com reported, "As a sales leader at a concierge service that arranges travel and accommodations for people seeking clinical trials around the world, she felt she had all the contacts and resources she needed to make Hill's trip happen."

Willock asked Hill, "If I could get you a ticket would you go?" Hill was in disbelief at the question, but Willock assured him, "I believe you and I were fated to meet and I'm going to make this happen."

She and Hill exchanged contact information, and when Willock arrived home, she created a GoFundMe campaign to raise \$7,500 to pay for Hill's travels to Rio. In just two short days, the campaign reached and surpassed its goal, with over 150 people donating to Hill's cause.

Hill was ecstatic to be reunited with his son in Brazil, as he has not seen him in months because of his Olympics training. Hill notes that though Willock started as a stranger, she has since become a great friend. "Liz was only a stranger for 5 minutes. We talk all the time now and I know we're going to be friends for a long time," he said.

Hill's son did not win a medal, but said his "chin is still high."

— Raven Clabough



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